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RUEHKS/AMCONSUL SAPPORO PRIORITY 4259  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 004656

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SUBJECT: A/S HILL'S MEETING WITH JAPAN PM ADVISOR ON  
ABDUCTIONS NAKAYAMA

Classified By: Charge d' Affaires Joseph R. Donovan. Reasons 1.4 (B) (D)

11. (C) Summary. The DPRK must take concrete steps for the return of the abductees and provide a credible explanation for the purported death of each victim in order to demonstrate progress on the abduction issue, Japan's Special Advisor on the Abduction Issue Kyoko Nakayama told visiting EAP A/S Hill on September 26. She urged the United States not to remove North Korea from the USG's list of state sponsors of terrorism absent progress in resolving the abduction issue. A/S Hill stressed that the United States attaches great importance to the problem, and that he raises abductees at every meeting with the DPRK. He also said he has told the North Koreans that it is in their interest to be more responsive on abductions, which would allow for improved relations with Japan. As the Six-Party process unfolds, further engagement with the DPRK will in no way cause the United States to sacrifice its close ties with Japan, A/S Hill stated. End summary.

12. (C) On September 26, A/S Hill met with Special Advisor to the Prime Minister for the Abduction Issue Kyoko Nakayama to discuss the issue of Japanese citizens abducted by North Korea during the 1970-80's. A/S Hill stressed that the United States attaches great importance to the abduction issue, and that he raises the matter at every meeting with the DPRK.

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What is Progress?  
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13. (C) Nakayama expressed thanks for U.S. support on the abduction issue. A/S Hill asked Mrs. Nakayama to define what Japan would view as progress toward resolving the matter. In response, Nakayama said that:

-- the DPRK and Japan must agree on concrete steps for the return of the abductees;

-- progress would be a Japanese judgment, not a DPRK one; and

-- Japan needs specific explanations from the DPRK of the circumstances of the deaths of abductees it claims are no longer alive.

14. (C) In response to A/S Hill's question, Nakayama emphasized that Japan does not find credible the evidence that the DPRK submitted to support Pyongyang's claim that eight kidnap victims had died after being transported to North Korea. As a result, Tokyo does not believe that the abductees are dead, would find additional explanations and information about cause of death meaningless. (Note: In September 2004, a Japanese team sent to investigate the fate of the eight concluded that some of the death certificates had been "forged," e.g. the documents had identical numbers. This conclusion, combined with the subsequent DNA test on the purported remains of Megumi Yokota (see para 6), form the basis of Tokyo's assertion that the abductees are alive. End note.)

15. (C) The "survivors," i.e., the 12 individuals that Tokyo maintains are still living in the North, would only be allowed to come to Japan when DPRK leader Kim Jong-il decides to return them, Nakayama said. The government of Japan hopes that North Korea will make the decision to send the abductees back. Nothing less would constitute progress on the abduction issue, Nakayama maintained, adding that a fuller role for Japan in the Six-Party process hinges on this question.

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The Importance of U.S.-Japan Ties  
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16. (C) Japan rejects the DPRK's official position that the abduction issue has already been settled, Nakayama stated. Nakayama suggested that the DPRK has been using the 2006

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missile and nuclear tests as a pretext to shift discussion away from the abduction issue. In response, A/S Hill assured Nakayama that the United States is prepared to work on all the issues in the context of the Six-Party Talks, noting that we do not need to choose between one or the other." He also stressed the importance of the U.S.-Japan relationship, underlining that as the Six-Party process unfolds, further engagement with the DPRK will in no way cause the United States to sacrifice its close ties with Japan. (Note: In November 2004, North Korea returned what it claimed was the remains of abductee Megumi Yokota. In December 2004, Japan conducted DNA testing that it claims showed the remains were not those of Ms. Yokota. The accuracy of Japan's DNA testing has since been called into question. End Note.)

17. (C) Nakayama said Japan could not support the United States removing North Korea from its list of state sponsors of terrorism absent progress on the abduction issue. She said that Japan "has strong trust" in the United States, and that the majority of Japanese people do not want to see the DPRK taken off of the list until the abduction issue is resolved. Any offer made by Pyongyang to release the Yodo-go hijackers, a Red Army Faction which commandeered a Tokyo-Fukuoka JAL flight in 1970, would not be nearly enough to alleviate Tokyo's concerns on the abductions issue, Nakayama maintained.

18. (C) Ambassador, PolCons Meserve, SA Klein, and embassy poloffs Jordan and Hansen accompanied A/S Hill. The Japanese side included four Councilors from the Cabinet Abduction Office: Takashi Minami, Takashi Kawachi, Naoki Fujii, and Takashi Okada.

19. (U) A/S Hill has cleared this message.  
DONOVAN